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AUTHOR	Jeffery, Roger, Ed.; Basu, Alaka M., Ed.
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ABSTRACT

Most of the papers in this volume were presented at a workshop in New Delhi (India) in April 1993, although some revisions and additions are included. Presenting primary evidence from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh and existing survey and census data, the papers in this collection explore interrelated issues of women's autonomy, female education, and fertility reduction in South Asia. The causal link between female education and fertility change has been assumed by policy makers but actually has a weak theoretical and empirical basis. These papers challenge the notion that there is a universal and causal relationship between the education of women and declining levels of fertility and that schooling enhances female autonomy. It seems that schooling has been associated with major changes in society that have affected the position of women and have been, in general, associated with increased female autonomy, but that these changes in themselves have not been enough to explain the dramatic fall in fertility. The linkage of female schooling to the decline in fertility seems to be part of a much wider change in the position of the individual and family within society. (Contains 11 figures, 79 tables, and 280 references.) (SLD)

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